

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Rep. Michael Honda (CA-15) joins Reps. Jay Inslee and Steve Israel in announcing today the formation of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC), a focused, action-based caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives. The group recently met with Assistant to the President Carol Browner to discuss energy and climate policy. Additionally, the SEEC has been working to strengthen green technology provisions in the American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Plan.

The SEEC's stated purpose is "to advance policies that promote clean energy technology innovation and domestic manufacturing, develop renewable energy resources, create green collar jobs throughout the product supply-chain, help arrest global warming and protect our nation's clean air, water and natural environment."

On the announcement of the caucus, Rep. Honda commented, "We've waited too long to address the looming threats of climate change. If we wait any longer, in just 25 years, climate change will claim up to 300,000 deaths per year, doubling the current rate. If we wait any longer, the sea levels will rise by more than 20 feet, devastating coastal areas worldwide. If we wait any longer, we will lose more than a million species worldwide by 2050 and the Arctic Ocean will be ice free. What we are saying by joining the Sustainability Energy and Environment Coalition is that we cannot wait any longer.

Proactive action not only saves us from these disastrous outcomes but stimulates our economy as well. The American Solar Energy Society's 2008 Report found that sustainable energy industries are already providing 8.5 million green collar jobs and have the potential for 40 million jobs by 2030. This is good for our climate and our economy."

The SEEC already has thirty-five founding members, a strong show of initial support in a session of Congress that will be a turning point in climate and energy policy. The coalition will operate like the Progressive Caucus Dogs or the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus – and also work with these and other groups on common goals – in that it will assertively push to advance its legislative agenda in talks with House leadership and other groups within Congress.

The SEEC formed at the end of the 110th Congress like-minded members of Congress met to discuss how they could impact the 2008 House energy and economic recovery bills. In the 2008 and 2009 economic recovery packages, the group successfully inserted provisions for the federal support of advanced-battery manufacturers. The Coalition will be working with House leadership, the White House, and other groups in Congress to advance their energy priorities.